SECTION II

INTRODUCTION

Section II contains natural resource data, databases, and procedures that help interpret these data. These may include soils data, Ecological Site Descriptions, climatic data, cultural resource information, threatened and endangered species data, and more. This information is useful in making decisions about land use and management. The Section is organized as follows:

SOIL LEGENDS – This subsection includes a list of soil map units in the county or area.

NONTECHNICAL SOIL DESCRIPTIONS – In this subsection the soils are described in lay terms.

TECHNICAL SOIL DESCRIPTIONS – The technical soil descriptions are referenced to the county or area soil survey descriptive legend or if the soil survey is completed, a published soil survey report.

SOIL INTERPRETATIONS – These subsections contain soil interpretations for the following:

- Cropland
- Rangeland, Grazed Forestland, Native Pasture
- Forestland
- Nonagricultural Land Uses
- Recreation
- Wildlife
- Pastureland and Hayland
- Mined Land
- Windbreak
- Engineerng
- Waste Disposal
- Water Quantity and Quality
- Hydric Soil
- HEL (Highly Erodible Land)

Interpretations given in this subsection are based on Map Unit Interpretation Record (MUIR), which is created by combining the Map Unit Record (SOI-6), and Soil Interpretation Record (SIR). This information is stored in the State Soil Survey Database

(3SD). 3SD contains current information for each map unit which has been edited by state and area specialists to represent local ranges in the data.

Soil survey interpretations are predictions of soil behavior for specified land uses and management practices. They are based on the soil properties that directly influence the specified use of the soil. Soil survey interpretations allow users of soil surveys to plan reasonable alternatives for the use and management of soils.

Limitations or Suitability

Some interpretations are expressed in terms of the degree of limitation or suitability. The interpretations apply to the soils in their natural condition and not for areas that are altered by cut-or-fill operations. Slight, good, moderate, fair, severe, poor or very poor are categories of limitations and suitability and are defined as follows:

Slight or Good – relatively free of limitations or limitations are easily overcome.
Moderate or Fair – limitations need to be recognized, but can be overcome with good management and careful design.
Severe, Poor or Very Poor – limitations are severe enough to make use questionable.

When soil interpretations are used in connection with delineated soil areas on soil maps, the information pertains to the soil for which the soil area is named. Other soils that are in areas too small to map may occur within the delineated area. The interpretations ordinarily do not apply to the included soils. More detailed studies are required if small, specific sites are to be developed or used within a given soil delineation.

Onsite Study

Soil interpretations will not eliminate the need for on-site study and testing of specific sites for the design and construction for specific uses. They can be used as a guide to planning more detailed investigations and for avoiding undesirable sites for an intended use. The soil map and interpretations can be used to select sites that have the least limitations for an intended use. No consideration is given in these interpretations to the size and shape of soil delineations nor to the pattern they form with other soils on the landscape.

VEGETATIVE GUIDE – This subsection provides conservation planting recommendations, organized by Major Land Resource Area (MLRA), Conservation Practice, Soil Type and Vegetative Soil Group. The recommendations for single species and seed mixes are presented as alternatives. In some cases, the conservation practices are further broken down by land use or management objective. For example, the planting recommendations for Cover and Green Manure Crops (Practice Code No. 340) in MLRA 17 are given for Orchards and Vineyards (tilled and non-tilled; irrigated and nonirrigated areas), and for Row and Field Crop Areas (irrigated and nonirrigated areas). Seeding rates are presented as pounds of pure live seed (PLS).

CLIMATIC DATA – This subsection contains local climatic data needed for planning resource management systems and installing conservation practices, such as record low and high temperatures; averages for such items as rainfall, length of growing season, temperatures and snowfall; water supply data; probability of receiving selected amounts of precipitation by months; and frost-free periods.

CULTURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION – Cultural resources include historic, archaeological, architectural, historic engineering, traditional cultural properties, and historic and cultural landscapes. There are criteria of significance for cultural resources that NRCS must consider during program, project and conservation planning. This subsection includes a brief description of the nature and distribution of cultural resources across the State and in the local service area, and a clear description of the cultural resources review process for the State.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES – This subsection contains information on federal and state threatened and endangered species, species of concern, and candidate species in California. This information must be considered during program, project and conservation planning.

ECOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTIONS – This subsection contains ecological site descriptions. An ecological site is a distinctive type of land with specific physical characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation. The ecological site description relates a unique vegetative assembly of plants with underlying soil resources on the landscape. Landscapes are divided into ecological sites for the purposes of inventory, evaluation, and management.

FORAGE SUITABILITY GROUPS – Forage Suitability Groups are composed of one or more individual soil map units having similar potentials and limitations for forage production. Soils within a forage production suitability group are sufficiently uniform to support the same adapted forage plants under the same management conditions; require similar conservation treatment and management to produce the forages selected in the quality and quantity desired; and have comparable potential productivity. Forage Suitability Groups have yet to be established in California.